



# THE ASHBY TOWN PUMP

VOL. I

APRIL, 1945

NO. 11

It is not our usual policy to comment on the war news but we must admit we were hedging a little for time in hopes of getting a scoop just before going to press. There is no question that the European war is in its final phase, perhaps to be drawn out by a number of Nazi die-hards who hope to take refuge in the Austrian mountains in a vain attempt to perpetuate their infamous organization.

There are basic changes in our thoughts to-day, however, as compared to a few months ago when victory in Europe seemed imminent. Two things appear evident: first, that no complete final victory may be forthcoming in Germany for some time, and secondly, that the Japanese war can be a slow, hard and life-taking struggle, even though a negotiated peace is not a remote possibility. These are sobering thoughts, and the knowledge of these facts has taken the edge off the desire to celebrate should Germany collapse.

The widespread holdings of the Japanese Empire, the millions in her army, the complexities of the long supply line to bring the fight to her are staggering. The knowledge that the boys now fighting in Germany will be transferred directly to the Pacific is

not cheering news.

But it is the understanding of these facts that has made us at home pledge a continued all out effort until every boy is home, for we know that the more we do means the quicker you can do the final job.

## Letters from the boys

One of the most interesting letters the "Town Pump" has received came from "Chot" Hopkins.

It would be impossible to pass on all the information it contained, but in particular, he mentions watching several landings on Pacific Islands and seeing the results of many other landings.

The operations on Guadalcanal involved three Ashby fellows: Luther Hayes, and "Ray" Wilkinson of the Marines, and "Bud" Piper of the Army relief.

"After the surrender of Guam, we worked with the carriers on the first strikes on the Philippines along with the softening up process on Palau and Morotai. I had a chance to go ashore on Peleliu after it was secured and know what "Lute" Hayes was up against there. It was very strongly fortified and there are still pill boxes with their



THE ASHBY  
TOWN PUMP



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eighteen inches of cement that are only barely scarred from shells, and it's a marvel how the Japs were ever routed from these positions. Two very nice dumps of Jap planes are of interest also. The most marvelous part though is to stand and try to imagine how "Bloody Nose Ridge" was taken. It's a long ridge going almost straight up to several hundred feet in places and of solid rock. Its face is completely dotted with caves, many of which had steel doors across the entrances. The Japs managed to hold out in force for quite some time and the remnants of the main forces continued sniping from behind these doors for many weeks. It certainly had all the potentialities of an impossibility from where I stood, but it had been done and there was no denying the fact. Crosses visible for many miles show which of the hills the bloodiest fighting was on."

For a Navy man, "Chet" certainly hands it to the Marines.  
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In response to the request published in the last issue of the "Town Pump" for comment from you boys and girls concerning a proposed new hall, we have received the first reply which expresses genuine enthusiasm in support of the election of a Planning Committee and hopes that the building itself will be a realization. Your comment on the type, the facilities and equipment, the location and any other comments for it or against it will make very interesting reading to others.

\* \* \* \* \*

A letter dated March 19th from S/Sgt. Wm. B. Korpi, whom we are glad to hear from, tells us that he is in England. He writes that he has made several missions over Germany and hopes to finish by June and to see Ashby by the beginning of Summer. We surely do hope his hopes are realized. He has received the "Town Pump" and looks forward to

receiving it each month. Glad to hear from S/Sgt. Korpi.

Somewhere in the Philippines

To the Town Pump:

Though I am not a native of Ashby, it is my Dad's home town and I have many relatives and friends from there. My Grandmother, Mrs. Emma Brooks, has sent me the "Town Pump" since the first copy and I find it very interesting. I know the servicemen and women from Ashby must really look forward to each issue and appreciate what the townspeople are doing for them. Keep up the good work--more power to you.

As for myself, I am a paratrooper and right now am somewhere in the Philippines. It's a nice country after the Nips are gone, but I'll take "The States" just as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Waldo N. Brooks, Jr.  
1st Lt. 187th Inf.

\* \* \* \* \*

A visiting two star general who couldn't produce his identification, was stopped by the Marine guard, who refused to let him pass. Exasperated, the General leaned forward and pointed to the stars on his shoulder and bellowed: "Do you know what those mean?" "Sure," popped the rookie, "You've got two sons in the service."

### Happy Birthday to You

Dorothy Bernhardt	May 1
Walter Parker	" 4
Charles Mattson	" 6
Chester Hopkins	" 8
Richard Leighton	" 13
Robert Leighton	" 13
Paul Heikkila	" 14
Luther Hayes, Jr.	" 16
Paavo Haapala	" 20
Fred Taylor, Jr.	" 26
Allan Holmes	" 27







# TOWN NEWS

## RED CROSS

### Signs of Spring:

Believe it or now after freezing and plodding through depths of snow all winter, Mother Nature has turned up with an early hot spring. The temperature hit a little over 80 degrees on the 25th of March and we will be cutting our lawns in March for the first time in 40 years--according to Fred Brooks.

After writing this first paragraph, the weather crossed us up for a few days by bringing in the first week of April with a real cold snap which saw the mercury dip down to 20 degrees and threaten the apple crop which was already in the bud stage. The full extent of the damage will not be known immediately, but it is a fact that some percentage of the crop has already suffered.

One of the signs of Spring is a grass fire and to date we have had two. The other Sunday there was a fairly good-sized one over by Sallinen's on the New Ipswich Road. Shortly after the siren sounded about two dozen cars started "hell for leather" over the winding and muddy roads. On arriving, everyone grabbed brooms, boards and anything else in reach and in a few minutes had the fire under control. Returning, the group looked hopefully at the small grass fire in front of Wilson's house but the sight of a fire extinguisher--ready for emergency--held out few hopes of more excitement.

A few days later the Shriver's sent in a call for help on a small fire which was quickly put under control.

Just a few days before we sent our news to press, the Gilbert's who live in the old Joel Hayward place just beyond Eddie Forss, sent in an alarm. The fire was concentrated in the second floor of the house and was brought under control without much damage beyond that of smoke and water.

Ashby goes over the top, per usual, in its Red Cross War Fund Drive. The town quota was \$1300 and the receipts exceeded that for a total of \$1468.00. The Ashby Co-Op Farmers helped to swell the fund with a dance and coffee social which was held in the First Parish Hall. Mrs. Otto Louhi was chairman.

Mrs. Cora Foresman and Mrs. Jean Farley were chairmen of the Party Committee and helped raise money by holding parties in various homes. One party was a candy making demonstration given by a newcomer to town, Mr. Kenneth Machoy. He is a professional candy maker and the results not only looked good--but tasted good.

Mrs. Caroline Wilkinson had charge of soliciting the different organizations in town.

About 15 workers canvassed the town and helped make the drive a success.

The Red Cross Surgical Dressings Group are now making dressings for the hospitals at Fort Devens.

### Did you Know That--

There are now 39,600 Lumen street lights in Ashby and 374 customers being served with electricity. There are 70.19 miles of Main Line wire on the 59 miles of public ways in the town.

A survey has been made this winter with a view toward supplying service to every home in Ashby, where the occupants want it as soon as Government restrictions have been removed and the necessary material and manpower is available.

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Charles Blake, who for several years has conducted the Wayside Gardens, was presented the Boston Post gold headed cane for being the oldest man in Ashby. He was 87 years old on April 7.







## GRANGE NEWS

Time again for Grange news and as usual everyone has been and still is very busy. With the early spring weather we got the urge to clean house and "Clean The Grange Hall" we did. On Thursday morning, March 29, bright and early a group of the old faithful members gathered in the hall armed with buckets, brooms, cleaning cloths and powders, spent the entire day working and cleaning. Every thing was moved, pictures were moved, cupboards were cleaned, windows washed and new curtains were hung. What a different place when we went home at night, but we all felt well repaid for our very hard work. We wanted to make a good impression on our class of 9 new candidates to be initiated on April 5th. There were 66 of our own members present. On April 19th the 3rd and 4th degree will be conferred on the same class of candidates preceded by our Annual Harvest Supper. We have been promised a goodly number of visitors for that night.

The Home and Community Service Committee have been working towards the goal of First Prize in State Grange competition. They have purchased a sickle for use in Grange work, a new American flag for the Town Common which was presented to the selectmen, and new curtains were made for the Town Hall. We made a service flag with 17 blue and 1 gold stars to be presented to our Pomona at the meeting to be held in Shirley. Our own service flag now has 24 blue and 2 gold stars as two more members, Irving Davis and Henry Johnson are leaving this week for induction into the armed services. One of our old members, Charles Blake recently held open house, celebrating his 87th birthday. We only wish that our Armed Force Members could be enjoying everything with us, and we certainly hope it will only be a short time until all will be back home with us.

## Basketball Banquet

Basketball letter awards to the High School boys' and girls' squads will be presented at a supper and entertainment to be held in their honor on the night of next April 11th in the First Parish Hall.

Attending the supper will be the complete squads of 12 boys and 12 girls and their respective coaches, Principal Waino Pernaa and Miss Elizabeth Hannant. Also, Charles M. Robinson, Supt. of Schools, and the School Committee, Mr. Luther Hayes, Mrs. Ruth Varney and Mr. Edwin Lyman; also a speaker, to be selected.

The affair is sponsored by the Parent Teachers Association and Mrs. Dorothy Hargraves, President; Mrs. Marion Mossman, Secretary, Mr. Fred Foresman, Chairman of the Program Committee, and Edward Forss, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee will be guests at the supper. Mr. Forss will be Toastmaster. The supper is in charge of Mrs. Viono Forss, Chairman of the Refreshment Committee of the P.T.A.

Immediately following the supper, the speaker will give a short address on "Sportsmanship", and other guests will be called on to say a few words of deserving respect and appreciation to the members of the squads and their coaches.

The supper will be followed by the regular meeting of the P.T.A. and an entertainment of appropriate moving pictures and an address.

It is hoped that Mr. Asa S. Allen, our highly respected friend of Ashby youth and sports will be able to accept the invitation to address this meeting.

## BIRTHS

A son to ITM3/c and Mrs. Frederick Lawrence, Whalom Road, Lunenburg. Mrs. Lawrence is the former Rachel Whitney of Ashby.



10. The above is a true and correct copy of the original as the same is in the possession of the



A son to Pfc. and Mrs. Rene Goguen.

Walter E. Piper

Ashby lost one of its best friends when Walter Piper died suddenly on March 13, while visiting in Florida.

Known to all, a friend to all and a staunch supporter of all community affairs, Walter will be greatly missed. He had even found time to be head of the "Town Pump" circulation and the chairman of our entertainment committee, which was so successful in raising money for our Christmas gifts for the servicemen.

Walter Piper was born August 1892, a son of the late John A. and Emily Kate (Davis) Piper. He attended and was a graduate of the Ashby schools.

He is survived by his wife, Bessie Brooks Piper, two sons, S 1/c Arnold Piper and Richard Piper; a grandson, Arnold Brooks Piper; a brother, Edward A., two sisters, Mrs. Fred A. Foresman and Mrs. Charles Metchear.

#### Marriage Announcement

On March 2, 1945, Helen N. Harris, formerly of Ashby, to Robert Clausen of the United States Coast Guard. They were married in Long Island City, N.Y. Helen, who was Rationing Board Clerk in Ashby for a few years, and her husband will reside in Alameda, California, where he is stationed.

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We are very glad to hear that Roger Varney is home from Massachusetts General Hospital where he had been on, and off for 9 weeks. While there he underwent a serious head operation. However we understand that he has been assured complete recovery.

\*\*\*\*\*

The decrepit old car drove up to the toll bridge. "Fifty cents," called the gateman. "Sold," replied the driver.

S.O.S.

The Town Pump Editorial Staff  
A problem now is facing,  
It has us all bewildered, quite,  
The floor we're madly pacing.

Our brains are stagnant in our  
heads

Ideas, too, are lacking.  
We're sending out this S.O.S.  
We surely need your backing.

As nears the time to go to press  
We're asking not for money,  
It's this eternal lack of news  
That isn't even funny.

Each one of you can help us with  
An item, great or small.  
You'll earn our everlasting

Thanks,  
We need you, ONE AND ALL.

The PTA is planning a Gay  
Nineties Revue to be presented  
sometime in May.

News of the Boys.

A high honor has come to a former Ashby young man. Bill Henlin, who is now Seaman First Class has been appointed to serve as an interpreter for the Finnish delegation at the United Nations Peace Conference to begin in San Francisco on April 25. Bill attended the Ashby school and upon leaving school entered the employ of Simond Saw and Steel Co. in Fitchburg where he rapidly advanced to the position of foreman. He is married to the former Gloria Kangas who now lives in Fitchburg.

T/Sgt. Blair Arsenault, Jr. has received the Air Medal for "meritorious achievement while participation in sustained bomber combat operations over Germany and German held countries." Blair is serving as a gunner on a B-17. He has been overseas for five months.

We have had a real promotion of one of our boys. Chester



Walter E. Fisher

My last day of the year  
I spent with Walter Fisher and  
his family in their home, while visiting

in the city, a friend to all  
a state of affairs, Walter will be  
nearly 70. He had been  
in the city for some time  
and the family was very  
kind of an entertainment com-  
mitted, which was very successful  
in raising money for the  
new gift of the foundation.

Walter Fisher was born in  
the city of New York, and  
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Hopkins has been made an Ensign in the Navy. The promotion was made way back last July, but Chet didn't receive word until this past month due to some twist of that "red tape".

Jack Woodruff has been home on furlough, and was informed by "his old man" that there was plenty of work to be done on the farm--so Jack is spending this week working in Ashby. While at his camp in the South, Jack ran a motion picture machine all day for training purposes.

We recently heard from Tom Hansen's mother, telling of the extensive travelling our little Town Pump did on its way to Tom. Before Tom got the paper in Alameda, Cal. it went to Key West, Boston, Miami, and Pittsburgh, Pa. Tom expects to go to sea very soon.

John Damon has been promoted to Aviation Electricians Mate Third Class and is now enjoying leave in Ashby. Next Wednesday, John leaves for Camp Kearney, Cal. and in a very short time--the South Pacific. While John was home, Bob Varney made a visit here from New York where he has been working at Merchant Marine Headquarters awaiting assignment to a ship. Ralph Varney now has an A.P.O. and we understand that he is with Aviation Headquarters in Paris, France.

We hear that Eino Halm has been made T/Sgt. Good work, Eino.

Theodore Heavisto is spending a short leave in Ashby at the home of his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Evert Heavisto.

We are sorry to hear that Toivo Lybeck is in a hospital somewhere in England.

June Taylor who is in the Seabees is helping to rebuild somewhere in the Philippines.

Sgt. Edwin Connor is stationed somewhere in the Philippine Islands, according to word recently received by his wife, Evelyn Rackliffe Connor.

Harry Allen, husband of Ruth Rackliffe Allen, has been promoted to Fireman First Class (F-1/c)!

John Salo of the Merchant Marine, has recently visited his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Salo. He recently returned from a trip to France and England.

After serving five months in the China-Burma-India theatre of war, Pfc. Chester W. Hardy son of William Hardy, has returned to this country and has reported to the AAF Redistribution Center at Atlantic City, N.J.

Ashby was saddened by the news that Harold Jackson, husband of Barbara Bennett Jackson, was killed in Germany on Feb. 24.

"Jack", as we all know him, was a young man of splendid character and his sunny disposition was revealed to all who came in contact with him. His many Ashby friends will miss him and our sympathy goes out to his courageous wife.

1st Lt. Dorothy Bernhardt is now stationed in Germany. Not long ago Dot had a few days off duty and went to Paris to see the sights. A real bed, a bath with plenty of hot water at the turn of a faucet, were a few of the real treats. Dot said shopping in a department store was real fun and to just look at the feminine things on display was wonderful after not seeing anything of the sort for such a long time.



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William Partridge recently learned of the death of his grandson, Lt. William P. Ryan, of Gardner. He was killed in action in Germany on March 5. The young man was born in Fitchburg but lived in Garner practically all of his life. His mother is the former Irene Partridge, who for many years before her marriage lived in Ashby.

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"I just made a deposit on a new Spring hat", one little bird said to another.

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Ph/m 3/c Shirley E. Wass has been transferred from the Brain Wave Department at the Chelsea Naval Hospital to the Welfare Recreation Office where her work is planning parties and entertainments for the patients. Last week Shirley produced a Variety Show using the talent found there in the hospital. In April an All-Wave show will be put on for the entertainment of patients and personell. This is just the kind of work Shirley loves and we all wish we could be there to cheer the results. We know they'll be good.

After a separation of nearly three years, Sgt. Luther H. Hayes Jr. USMCR and his brother AMML/c Leonard A. Hayes had a reunion recently at the home of their parents, Mr. & Mrs. Lyther Hayes. The young marine after 29 months of service with the First Marine Division in the Southwest Pacific is now stationed at Iona Island, N.Y. His Brother, Leonard, has been stationed at the naval air base at Atlanta, Ga., for several months and recently received a taxi pilot license which permits him to taxi planes at the base.

John Enright, who was inducted into the army in September, 1944, is now with the 3rd army in Germany. His brother, Bill, has been spending a leave with his parents in New Ipswich. He was in several battles while serving aboard ship in the South Pacific. He is now stationed at Miami, Fla.

A third brother, Edward, also in the South Pacific, may be on his way back to this country as no word had been received from him for some time.

Ralph Curran has been honorably discharged from the army and is employed at the Simonds plant in Fitchburg. Ralph was stationed in England for several months previous to his assignments in this country.

We have just heard that while Lennie Hayes was home recently he presented Miss Evelyn Williams of Cleveland, Ohio, with a diamond. She was visiting here in Ashby while hewas home.

Lester Hodgeman--an old Ashbyite breezed into town recently--but didn't stay long enough to enable us to get in touch with him and we can't find out who did. Please, Lester, won't you write again and tell us with whom you visited?

Rauni Honkala's name has just been added to our honor roll in front of the library.

Edwin Walker, having made two trips to Europe with the Merchant Marine, is now on his second trip to Chile, and as fate would have it, Edwin, who "loved" the farm so much, finds himself escorting a herd of Holsteins and Guernseys. We also hear that he is killing two birds with one stone by saving his shirts--unwashed--to trade them with the Chileans for valuable trinkets.

We learn that Petty Officer Elroy Walker is now instructing submarine warfare at the Norfolk Naval Training Base. His knowledge of radio and radar makes him well suited for doing this work.

We are so glad to hear that Blair Arsonault, who was reported missing in action over Germany since March 21, is back







with his own outfit. He returned to the United States lines on Easter Sunday.

First Lt. Marjorie Bennett is now assigned to the Mason General Hospital, Brentwood, New York.

Chester Hardy has sent in his letter of thanks for the past issues of the Town Pump and also for his ~~Xmas gift~~ which unfortunately was stolen shortly after he received it. He said it was the best billfold he ever had and to make matters worse it was stolen just three hours after he had gotten his pay.

A grand letter was received from Garnett Bennett, to quote: "The past two and a half months have carried me through lots of strange countries: Puerto Rico, British Guiana, Brazil, Ascension Island, Liberia, North Africa, British Gold Coast, Nigeria; Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Egypt, Arabia and India. I enjoy reading the Town Pump, as it gives one a chance to hear from the boys. I left Ashby three years ago but I haven't forgotten any of the boys or the town of Ashby. Would like to hear from Wally Elliott. To all the boys from Ashby, I want to say Hello.

Sgt. Garnet Bennett 1332 A.A.F.  
B.U.

Sq. B. I.C.D.  
A.P.O. 490 c/o P.M.  
New York, N.Y.

Richard Wilkinson certainly has seen some interesting sights since he left Ashby. The following is quoted from one of his letters. "I looked up Ray Wright and he is looking fine, but says they are keeping him busy training. I have recently had a rest period in Rome. One of the buildings I visited was the Pantheon, a temple built about 2000 years ago and on it the first dome ever built. The dome is 142 feet in diameter, a remarkable piece of architecture considering its age. Here the

people worshipped their pagan gods, and their souls were supposed to have ascended thru the hole in the top of the dome.

Algernon Pease, formerly of Ashby, is now in the armed services.

Albert Damon, Walfred Hill and James Nowcombe have passed their physical exams for the army.

#### SCHOOL NEWS

George Johnson, a member of the Sophomore Class, has turned out to be the unfortunate victim of scarlet fever. The whole high school is mourning over this tragedy and hope that George will be back in circulation soon.

Plans for the Sophomore Dance, which will be held on April 27th at the First Parish Hall, have been completed. Dick Hill's Blue Jackets will provide the music.

Something unprecedented in Ashby School history, the Seniors ran their play for two successive nights to capacity audiences, all which helped to swell the funds to defray the cost of graduation expenses. The seniors are "all stowed up" this week in anticipation of their New York trip. They are leaving on Friday the 13th for a week of fun and sightseeing. Mr. Pernaa will accompany them.

Mr. Pernaa has found himself a boys baseball team which will play a number of the surrounding town's teams. The girls are also forming a baseball team with Miss Bouley as their coach.

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A girl and a car are much alike. A good grease and paint job conceals the years, but the lines tell the story.



